

Congressman Elijah E. Cummings

May 1, 2002

7th Congressional District of Maryland
1632 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4741 • (202) 225-3178 fax



It is both a privilege and honor to represent you in the United States Congress. While serving you, I will continue outreach efforts to further inform you of legislative action in Congress. I welcome your advice. Government "by the people" is the cornerstone of my legislative philosophy.

*Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress*

Congressman Elijah Cummings' District Offices:

3000 Druid Park Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 367-1900
(410) 367-5331 fax

7131 Liberty Road, Suite 202
Baltimore, MD 21207
(410) 496-2010
(410) 496-2015 fax

754 Frederick Road
Catonsville, Maryland 21228
(410) 719-8777
(410) 455-0110 fax

The 21st Century Transformation of Baltimore City

On the morning of April 15, Congressman Cummings joined Mayor Martin O'Malley, State Senator Nathaniel McFadden, Del. Hattie N. Harrison, Del. Clarence Davis, and Council Member Paula Johnson Branch in unveiling the initiation of the East Baltimore Housing and Biotechnology Complex.

This comprehensive urban revitalization plan, which is estimated to be completed within the next five to seven years, will create a major biotechnology center in East Baltimore.

In the process, the Biotech Complex is expected to produce 8,000 new jobs and 2,000 new or rehabilitated homes within the surrounding area.

"There will not be another project like this in most of our lifetimes," Congressman Cummings said.

The neighborhoods surrounding Johns Hopkins have experienced a sharp decline in population over the past 20 years.

For this reason, Congressman Cummings and other local leaders met over last few months to consider and seek modifications to the proposed urban redevelopment project in which Johns Hopkins, private industry, government and the neighborhood would join together to transform blight and decay into a flourishing and prosperous community.

The series of meetings and negotiations resulted in a far-reaching community and minority inclusion agreement.

The agreement calls for the inclusion of minorities in the planning, construction, business development and advancement of

the Biotech Complex. Additionally, the project will seek the participation of minority investors involved with the project.

"There will not be another project like this in most of our lifetimes."

-Congressman Cummings

"Future generations have leaders like **Councilwoman Paula Johnson Branch** to thank for her persistence and tireless efforts in working to bring this project to fruition," Congressman Cummings said. "Other elected officials such as **Sen. Nathaniel McFadden, Delegates Hattie Harrison, Talmadge Branch and Clarence "Tiger" Davis** have been involved from the beginning when the biotech complex was merely an idea."

He continued, "They remember the East Baltimore of their youth and would like to see it that way again. It is people like the distinguished businessman **Joseph Haskins** who deserves thanks for heading up the East Baltimore Development, Inc. simply because he cares about Baltimore."

The agreement also addresses the interests of homeowners in the project area, as well as renters who would be relocated. This involves making accommodations so that the community and the city will be able to adapt and settle into these changes.

"The inclusion of local residents in these new jobs and homes to be created has been my top priority in the planning process – and will continue to be my goal as we proceed," Congressman Cummings said.

Tax Cuts at the Expense of Social Security

On April 18, Congressman Cummings joined his House Democratic colleagues in voting against legislation that would make the Bush tax cut permanent at the expense of Social Security. The legislation, which passed the Republican-controlled U.S. House, will spend \$400 billion on tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. Every cent of this tax cut comes directly out of the Social Security trust fund.

“This severely hinders our ability to guarantee benefits to future generations of seniors, Congressman Cummings said.”

Over the past several years, both parties in Congress have voted seven times to put the Social Security trust fund in a lock box.

“Before we agree to make this tax cut permanent, we must have a plan in place to save and protect Social Security,” said Congressman Cummings. “Social Security has allowed generations of retirees to live with independence and dignity. American families work hard and pay into the system, and they should be able to count on Social Security when they retire.”

The cost for just two years of this tax cut is nearly \$400 billion, while the cost of the tax cut in subsequent years – when the baby boomers will be retiring and drawing their Social Security benefits – will exceed \$4 trillion.

The proposed House legislation now goes to the Senate, where it is likely to be defeated by the Democratic-majority.

Congressman Cummings Calls for the Safe Transportation of Hazardous Material

On April 25, Congressman Cummings emphasized the need for the safe transportation of hazardous material at a joint congressional hearing conducted by the House Transportation Subcommittees on Railroads and Highways & Transit. As a member of both subcommittees, Congressman Cummings heard testimony on the safety issues that would be raised by the proposed transportation of nuclear waste from local nuclear power sites to the Yucca Mountain storage facility in Nevada.

“We must assure people nationwide that the transportation of nuclear waste is performed with the highest safety standards available,” Congressman Cummings said. “I encourage every Member here today to consider this issue as if the hazardous waste or materials were being transported through their state.”

During the hearing, Congressman Cummings discussed potential dangers caused by hazardous material. He gave the example of the cargo train derailment that occurred in Baltimore in the summer of 2001. The derailment resulted in a chemical fire that lasted four days. The National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating whether the unsafe transportation of hazardous material caused the fire.

“I am sure this accident was not peculiar to Baltimore and could have happened anywhere in the United States where hazardous material is transported,” Congressman Cummings said. “The accident was only a glimpse of a potential disaster that could occur in the transportation of nuclear waste.”

To further address this issue, Congressman Cummings has joined Congressman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) in requesting the Government Accounting Office to examine and identify major transportation carriers

that transport hazardous and radioactive chemicals through densely populated areas.

National Congress of Black Women Give “Good Brother” Award to Congressman Cummings

Noted civil rights leader C. Delores Tucker, the convening founder and chair of the National Congress of Black Women, came to Baltimore City Hall on April 19 to present Congressman Cummings with the prestigious “Good Brother Award.”

As one of only four men to ever receive this recognition, Congressman Cummings was acknowledged for his contribution to the lives of American women, Dr. Tucker said.

In the course of his remarks, Congressman Cummings expressed his gratitude, respect and admiration for the women who were recognized at the event, as well as the women who inspired him in his life including his mother Ruth Cummings and his mentor in public life former Maryland Delegate Lena K. Lee. He challenged the women at the gathering to continue to uplift the lives of others, despite the adversities they face.

The event also recognized the profound contributions made by the Baltimore women who serve in government and community service.

The women applauded at the event include Baltimore City Council President Sheila Dixon, Register of Wills Reverend Mary W. Conaway, Maryland State Delegate Ruth Kirk, and Frances Murphy, the publisher of the Washington and Baltimore Afro-American Newspaper.